Reviewer’s report

Title: Cigar Package Quantity and Smoking Behavior

Version: 0 Date: 03 Mar 2019

Reviewer: Lisa Henriksen

Reviewer's report:

This paper makes an important contribution to tobacco regulatory science concerning cigar packaging and price, which are the current focus of many local sales restrictions on tobacco products. This paper is important to inform more comprehensive federal regulation. Strengths of the study are the novel use of longitudinal data from PATH, the thoughtful consideration of cigar product categories and multiple behavioral outcomes. The point that larger pack sizes result in cheaper per stick prices is particularly important evidence for the need to establish a minimum per stick price. Addressing minor concerns would improve an already strong paper.

1. Recognizing that adults are the focus of this paper, it is still an important limitation that the analysis does not consider flavor. Suggest to add or provide a compelling rationale to omit flavor (particularly menthol).

2. Regarding larger pack sizes and subsequent cigar use, the results were not significant for cigarillos and large cigars, but the conclusion - that cigar smokers with certain sociodemographic characteristics may be more likely to continue using cigars and more likely to purchase larger pack quantities -- sounds like a statement that industry would exploit to defeat local policies to increase minimum pack size. Why not mention evidence that the combination of larger pack sizes and a minimum price per stick reduces cigar consumption from Chicago, New York City or elsewhere?

3. Consider a handful of minor edits below:

Line 56: Shouldn't tobacco weight be mentioned here?
Line 60: changed between 2008 and 2015. Little filtered…
Line 61: insert "federal" tax increase
Line 64: This point would be clearer if it were evident that 2- and 3-packs displaced single cigars at similarly cheap prices (i.e. less than $1)
Line 97: Suggest to mention PATH from the start rather than wait until the Methods section
Line 122: Please provide a rationale for excluding blunt-exclusive users (esp. with concern that they are predominately African American). What about using cigar/blunt wraps? If those are not mentioned in PATH, suggest to add as a limitation. Also, it is a little hard to imagine how filtered cigar users are making blunts…?
Line 169: Presenting back-transformed results is controversial - would benefit from a stat review and citation for this practice.
The discussion calls for research about targeting small or large pack quantities based on sociodemographic factors, but at least some research addresses this topic. Studies that could be cited in the introduction or discussion are:

PMID: 29025999
PMID: 28444233
PMID: 23948008

Line 288: Suggest to add to limitations a qualification about conclusions regarding price per stick of cigarillos if it is true that tobacco weight varies between and within brands.

Line 294: Suggest to omit "large"

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I recommend additional statistical review

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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